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BASILDON

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FESTIVAL LIFT-OFF

International hot air balloon fiesta is coming to Billericay

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How I became a golden girl after my kidney transplant

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DALE FARM EVICTION COUNTDOWN

TRAVELLER FAMILIES SERVED NOTICES IN CRACKDOWN



By JON AUSTIN
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TRAVELLERS have been served notices to leave Dale Farm by August 31.

Basildon Council arrived on the site yesterday to tell many of the 90 families living on the 51 illegal pitches they will be evicted unless they leave peacefully.

Michelle Sheridan, 33, from the site, pictured, said: "The atmosphere down here is terrible. All the old ladies are crying. There are a lot of sick people here and they are all so worried now."

It comes as the Echo can exclusively reveal six families living on three caravan pitches could be immune from eviction because of a legal loophole.

FULL STORY:
SEE PAGE 8



THE NEW KIA PICANTO
THE SMALL CAR GROWN UP



Drugs bust five bailed

FIVE people arrested in a drugs bust at a Southend tower block have been bailed.

Police found them at a flat at Bewley Court, in Whittingham Avenue, Southend, along with a haul of suspected class A drugs at about 6.15am on Thursday.

The suspects, two men aged 52 and 48 and from Southend, a 68-year-old man from Rainham, a 26-year-old woman from Trinidad, and a 17-year-old boy from west London, have been bailed until September 22 while the substances are tested.

£4k raised on bike ride

A RETIRED teacher raised £4,000 for charity by cycling across Europe.

Nick Ullmann, 60, from Basildon, pedalled 1,300 miles from London to Vienna, Austria, to mark his retirement from teaching at Billericay School.

The money raised will go to the Red Cross, which helped to reunite his father and grandmother after the Second World War.

Almost half of the money was raised by Billericay School pupils, through fundraising events they organised to support their teacher.

Holiday club for children

YOUNGSTERS can enjoy a carnival-themed holiday club this summer.

Crowstone Christian Centre, in Crowstone Road, Westcliff, is hosting the club from August 1 to 5, catering to children aged five to 11.

Youngsters also getting the chance to enjoy fairground games and learn circus skills. Registration takes place between 10am and noon on Monday, August 1, with the club running Tuesday to Friday from 9.30am to noon each day. Places cost £20 per child, plus £1 for a team T-shirt. To book, call 01702 352668.

Thieves take church goods

A CHURCH had £135 of goods stolen. Thieves struck at a shed linked to St Cedd's Church, in Bridgwater Drive, Westcliff.

Stolen items included a strimmer, and a lawnmower. The theft happened between 10pm and 6am on Sunday, June 30 and

New group set up a camp on a field at Fossetts Farm field



■ Concerned – councillor Peter Ashley at the Fossetts Farm field where travellers have set up

Picture: ANNA LUKALA BA46896_02

Travellers' eviction countdown begins

THE countdown to the eviction of hundreds of travellers from Dale Farm has begun.

Many of the 90 families living on 51 illegal caravan pitches at the Crays Hill site were served with notices yesterday giving them until August 31 to leave or face eviction.

Essex Police accompanied staff hired by Basildon Council to serve the orders.

Michelle Sheridan, 33, lives on one of the plots in a road called Beauty Drive and said the atmosphere at the site was terrible.

She said: "We heard they were coming, but we have been expecting it for so long. Then they came and put the notices on all the plots. All the old ladies are crying."

"There is a lot of sick people here and they are all so worried now."

The council was unable to serve notices on all 51 pitches as it met with resistance in the area

By JON AUSTIN

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of the site known as Camilla Drive.

Council leader Tony Ball said the eviction could still progress because most people had been notified and the authority had made an attempt to serve notice on all the plots.

The notices came just days after the council agreed to pay up to £1.2million towards the eviction costs of Essex Police to complete the funding for the £18million operation. The eviction can take place any time from September 1, but it is not yet known if a date has been set.

Mr Ball spoke of his disappointment eviction appeared to be the only outcome to the ten-year planning dispute.

He said: "It is very disappointing we are in this situation, as for years we have attempted to work with the people living on this unauthorised site to seek a

peaceful resolution. It is important to remember this is a green belt site and this development is not legal. The law must be upheld equally and fairly in all cases and the council has made clear, for more than ten years, its intention to clear this site and return it to a condition in keep-

Traveller Maryanne McCarthy said: "We get treated worse than animals. They are allowed to live in the green belt, but not us. It is terrible now the notices have been served and we are all so upset."

If families remain on site after August 31 bailiffs will be able to go in and remove caravans and outbuildings plus remove hardcore bases on the plots. The council is offering to help people relocate and is encouraging all families to make homelessness applications.

We get treated worse than animals. They are allowed to live in the green belt, but not us



■ Maryanne McCarthy – "we are all so upset"

Protesters plan to set up demo camp nearby

PROTESTERS against the eviction will set up a demo camp near the site from August 27.

"Camp Constant" will be set up on land owned by travellers in Oak Lane Crays Hill.

Activity days to prepare hundreds of supporters for non-violent

Natalie Fox, of support group Dale Farm Solidarity, said: "An entire community will be made homeless and we'll see children pulled from their schools and dumped out onto the roads."

Richard Sheridan, Dale Farm spokesman, added: "People

Six families may be legally safe to stay

AT least six families from Dale Farm could be immune from eviction due to a legal technicality.

An error with enforcement notices served on the Crays Hill illegal site several years ago

remove the hardcore bases.

Dawn French, council head of corporate services, said: "The council confirms there are three pitches where it has no authority to remove caravans from the land. It does however have